

First Clown.

Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she wilfully seeks her own salvation?

Second Clown.

I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave straight.
The crowner hath sate on her, and finds it Christian burial.

First Clown.

How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

Second Clown.

Why, 'tis found so.

Second Clown

But is this law?

First Clown.

Ay, marry, is't- crowner's quest law.

Second Clown.

Will you ha' the truth an't? If this had not been a
gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

First Clown.

Why, there thou say'st! And the more pity that great folk
should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves
more than their even-Christian. Come, my spade! There is no
ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and grave-makers.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio afar off.

First Clown.

Cudgel thy brains no more about it.
Go, get thee to Vaughn; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[Exit Second Clown.]

[Clown digs and sings.]

First Clown.

In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet;
To contract- O- the time for- a- my behove,
O, methought there- a- was nothing- a- meet.

Hamlet.

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at
grave-making?

Horatio.

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Hamlet.

'Tis e'en so.

First Clown. *[sings]*
But age with his stealing steps
Hath clawed me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land, 3
As if I had never been such.
[Throws up a skull.]

Hamlet.

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. How the
knave jowls it to the ground, as if 'twere Cain's jawbone, that
did the first murder!

First Clown; (sings)

A pickaxe and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet;
O, a Pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.
Throws up [another skull].

Hamlet.

There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer?
Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock
him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him
of his action of battery?
I'll speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

First Clown.

Mine, sir.
[Sings] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

Hamlet.

I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in't.

First Clown.

You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours.
For my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

Hamlet.

Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine. 'Tis for
the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

First Clown.

'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.

Hamlet.

What man dost thou dig it for?

First Clown.

For no man, sir.

Hamlet.

What woman then?

First Clown.

For none neither.

Hamlet.

Who is to be buried in't?

First Clown.

One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Hamlet.

How absolute the knave is! How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

First Clown.

Of all the days i' th' year, I came to't that day that our
last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Hamlet.

How long is that since?

First Clown.

Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that. It was the
very day that young Hamlet was born- he that is mad, and sent
into England.

Hamlet.

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

First Clown.

Why, because 'a was mad. 'A shall recover his wits there;
or, if 'a do not, 'tis no great matter there.

Hamlet.

Why?

First Clown.

'Twill not be seen in him there. There the men are as mad as he.

Hamlet.

How came he mad?

First Clown.

Very strangely, they say.

Hamlet.

How strangely?

First Clown.

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Hamlet.

Upon what ground?

First Clown.

Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy
thirty years.

Hamlet.

How long will a man lie i' th' earth ere he rot?

First Clown.

Faith, if 'a be not rotten before 'a die (as we have many
pocky corses now-a-days that will scarce hold the laying in, I
will last you some eight year or nine year. A tanner will last
you nine year.

Hamlet.

Why he more than another?

First Clown.

Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade that 'a will
keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of
your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now. This skull hath lien
you i' th' earth three-and-twenty years.

Hamlet.

Whose was it?

First Clown.

A whoreson, mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

Hamlet.

Nay, I know not.

First Clown.

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 'A pour'd a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

Hamlet.

This?

First Clown.

E'en that.

Hamlet.

Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio. A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times. And now how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? Quite chap- fall'n? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come. Make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.